

Following are some old family letters. I have corrected spelling and punctuation in some of the letters to make them easier to read. Hopefully I have not misread or mistyped anything (some of the handwritten letters are pretty hard to read). – Mike Wilson (updated April 2017)

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Letter to Michael Wilson (Albuquerque, New Mexico) from Catherine McGrew, dated November 16, 1966 at Denver, Colorado

Dear Michael,

Mother received your letter today and was delighted to hear from you. However, as you may or may not know, she is ninety-three years old and cannot see to write. She does not have a complete genealogy of the Wilson family, but has asked me to send you the following information hoping that it will help with your school assignment.

The Wilsons lived near Glasgow, Scotland and migrated to the new land before the American Revolution, fighting with the colonists in that war. James Wilson, who was one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, was a brother of a many times great grandfather of yours. A biography published in 1956, “James Wilson, Founding Father, 1742 - 1798” by Charles Page Smith gives much of the credit for writing the Declaration of Independence to James Wilson, rather than to Thomas Jefferson.

From this generation until that of your great, great, great grandfather, mother does not recall the names.

Your great, great, great grandfather, William Adair Wilson lived in Augusta County, Virginia, and moved to Kentucky and later to Marshall, Missouri. His wife was Mary Elizabeth Reeves, the daughter of Benjamin Harrison Reeves, who was appointed by the President of the United States to survey the Santa Fe trail from Independence, Missouri to Santa Fe, New Mexico, when it was built. William Adair & Mary Elizabeth Wilson were the parents of nine children, seven of whom were Catherine, Benjamin, Leonard, Annette, Adair, Byrd, Horace Everett. During the Civil War, William Adair Wilson was an officer in the Union Army. His friends and neighbors who sympathized and fought with the Confederacy made so many threats against his life (even coming to his home with ropes to hang him) and also threatened the lives of his wife and children, that to protect his family he moved them into Ohio for the duration of the Civil War.

William Adair Wilson’s son, Leonard, was your great, great grandfather. He was born in Marshall, Missouri, January 13, 1846, and fought with the Union Army at the end of the Civil War. He married Mary Wood Sandidge who was born in Marshall, Missouri, September 12, 1850. Two of their sons died in infancy, but they were the parents of Leonie Wilson and Horace Everett Wilson. The family moved to Colorado in 1884 and to Denver in 1885. (It is interesting to know that the first Sandidge came to this country from Ireland, also before the Revolutionary War. She was the daughter of an Irish nobleman and she eloped with a commoner.)

Your great grandfather, Horace Everett Wilson, was born in Marshall, Missouri, August 1, 1882. He married Rose Lino of Denver, Colorado, about 1903. They were the parents of one son, Leonard, who is your grandfather.

We are sorry we do not have more detailed information for you. However, mother says that many of your ancestors are written up in the book, “History of Missouri”, which is probably available in the Public Library.

Mother and I would both like to meet you sometime and hope that if you ever come to Denver you will come to see us.

With love from mother and myself,

Catherine McGrew

Notes by mlw:

First, note that Leonie (Catherine's mother) was the daughter of Leonard Wilson and Mary Wood Sandidge, and the granddaughter of William Adair Wilson and Mary Elizabeth Reeves, so the things she says about them should be pretty reliable. Some of the information about earlier ancestors, I'm not so sure about.

I have Page Smith's biography of James Wilson, and can see no correspondence between what it says about James Wilson's brothers and what I know of our Wilson ancestors. There is a fairly plausible version of this in the Foster/Reid Family Tree web site on Ancestry.com, in which James Wilson was a half-brother of my fifth-great-grandfather, Robert Wilson, but I know of no evidence for this. (Also, note that James Wilson is credited with being an author of the Constitution, not the Declaration of Independence.)

I have not seen elsewhere anything about William Adair Wilson moving to Kentucky; I think that he, with his parents, moved directly from Virginia to Missouri. I suppose it's possible there was a short layover in Kentucky.

I don't know where the business about the first Sandidge in the U.S. being the daughter of an Irish nobleman came from, but I doubt that it is true.

At one time, I looked but was unable to find the "History of Missouri" referred to, but have found other books with information about ancestors. In particular, "History of Saline County, Missouri" has a nice biography of William Adair Wilson and a very short one of his son, Leonard Wilson, plus biographies of several other family members.

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Letter to Mrs. Daniel [sic] E. Wilson (Albuquerque, N.M.) from P.D. Gathright, dated 11-18-66 at Little Rock, Arkansas [on letterhead of P.D. Gathright ORGANIZER & CONDUCTOR OF TOURS]

Dear Mrs. Wilson:

[This first part is handwritten and a little hard to read – mlw]

Just returned to Little Rock from a tour to find your most welcome letter. Pardon the brevity of this one. I do hope you can receive this in time as per your request. The family name and history will be found in my book which I hope to publish before too long. From this old copy I am enclosing and with the knowledge you have of uncle Franklin with the aid of the form I am enclosing he should show a reasonable lineage for a school boy. That is of the Gathrights. I could talk and write about them for a long long time. Jesse F. was the son of Miles Madison, the son of James C — the son of Miles H. who came from Virginia who settled in Georgia in 1790. I have a further history on him and the settling of his estate in Georgia which lingered from 1815 to 1836. Very interesting. Hope this short history will help him a little.

P. D. Gathright

[Next are a couple of typed sheets, with this handwritten note at the top:]

This was written in 1960. A lot of water has passed under the bridge since then. I have the family tree back to 1576.

To facilitate correspondence in answering the inquiries in my growing volume of mail and also as a sort of introduction to new correspondents and others, I prepared this printed form.

I spend a great deal of time writing to people and love it. Every days mail brings joy in reading and more in answering it. I have a “study” with every comfort for reading and writing and I enjoy using it.

Yes, I have traced our ancestry through Georgia where Miles H. Gathright, the first one to acquire land there settled in 1790, through Virginia where Samual and Ephram Garthwaite came in early sixteen hundred, to the Rev. Miles Garthwaite born in 1576 and was appointed by Queen Elizabeth as Rector of Fulbeck Church of Grantham Lincolnshire England in 1598.

The name Garthwaite meaning an enclosed garden in Welsh was not changed abruptly in the new world but gradually by misspelling or trying to pronounce the name on illegible documents. From Garthwaite to Garthwright and finally Gathright in mid seventeen hundred.

My father James Henry was the son of Miles Madison, who was the grandson of Miles H. who was the first settler of Gathrights in Georgia in 1790. Miles Madison [handwritten note — my grandfather. also Evelyn’s grandfather. her father and mine were half brothers.] born in Georgia 1822 was the son of James C. who was born in Georgia in 1796. Miles Madison moved to Arkansas in 1854 when my father was eight years old.

My father served one year in the Civil War and three years later married Lou Nunnally June 9, 1868 to this union eleven children were born. Of this number I was the youngest, born August 12, 1893.

Eight of our clan lived with their mate more than a half century and with their family and friends celebrated that Golden event which is noteworthy. One is soon to celebrate her 60th wedding anniversary [handwritten note — this couple is still living]. There are six of us still living.

In my search I found nothing to be ashamed of but rather have a feeling of pride in the name, the character and conduct of my forebears. Most of them were Baptist in faith and most heads of families affiliated with the Masonic fraternity. By the way I found one Masonic body named Gathright Lodge #34. During this search I have had some wonderful rich experiences some of which I record in my history of the Gathrights.

November 1916 I married Ethyl Estelle Wallace. To us were born two sons, Morrell and P. D., Jr. After the death of the boys’ mother I married Laura Gladys Holt in 1957. [“And we are happy.” is scratched out and a handwritten note at the bottom of the page says “Since this letter was written in 1960 I have written another book entitled ‘How to Prepare for Retirement’. I also have separated from my wife. I live alone in The Plaza Towers here in Little Rock. I organize and conduct tours. Marrying a second time is my major regret.”]

I was educated in the school of “Hard Knocks” and had it rough. Had some bitter disappointments in the course of human events but I have lived a full life and have no regrets.

I have written a book entitled “Horse Sense” or the “Application of Knowledge”. Now I am writing a history of the Gathrights which keeps me busy and I enjoy it.

Wife and I enjoy traveling in foreign countries as well as our own. All through my lifetime, music has meant much to me. My hobbies now are ancestor hunting, writing and home movie photography. My favorite sports are baseball and football.

I am in reasonably good health and have no worries, either financial, ["domestic" scratched out] or otherwise. I am entertaining the fond hope of reaching the end of the trail in serenity and after crossing Jordan take Old St. Pete by the hand and say "Where are The Gathright's and their Kin?"

Sincerely,

P. D. Gathright

Notes by mlw:

As far as I know, P.D. did not finish his Gathright book before his death.

The note about Evelyn refers to my great-aunt, Evelyn Gathright, daughter of Jesse Franklin Gathright (referred to here as "uncle Franklin" and "Jesse F."). Apparently my mother (Audrey Gathright Wilson) is the one who wrote to P.D., and she must have mentioned Aunt Evelyn and Jesse Franklin in her letter.

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Letter to J. H. [John Henry] Kanouse and family from Aaron Kanouse, dated Jan. 4, 1952 at Olympia, Wash.

Dear Cousins -

This will come as a surprise to you to know the family is represented way up here in the Northwest. Bruce Kanouse told me about you when I visited him last winter in Phoenix, and just the other day he sent me your address.

I am the grandson of your father's brother Henry. My father was Hurley A. Kanouse who passed away age 50 in 1918. I was 16 years old at that time. My parents moved out to Western Wash. when I was one year old, from Muskegon, Mich. where I was born.

When I was 19 I took a trip back to Mich. and lived with Uncle Aaron (my great uncle) for six months. At that time Aunts Rachel Kanouse and Phoebe Rubley were alive, also Uncle Reuben, Bruce's father. I had heard of Uncles Bill and Mose Kanouse that moved to Kansas or thereabouts in the early days of that country, but never heard from any of the families of either.

I have been in the retail flower bulb business since I was 20 years old and our catalogs go all over the U.S. Occasionally we hear from some customer in the states of Kansas, Nebraska and Okla., asking if we are related to such-and-such a Kanouse they know. We assume we are related because our name is not a common one.

My father's brother, Will Kanouse, was named after your father I believe. Uncle Will passed away last May aged 71. He never married, and I am an only son, and having no sons, our branch of the family name dies out when I go. When my Uncle Will was a small boy and while visiting at Uncle John's place at Bethel, he remembered your family driving up there for a visit, traveling by covered wagon. If this is true you were undoubtedly along on that trip. All I know is what has been passed down to me.

Do you know anything about where the Kanouse family lived in Pennsylvania before migrating to Michigan? Anything pertaining to early day history will be very welcome.

We have two daughters in Hi school, 15 and 16 years old. Both are very musical, Carole playing clarinet in the school band, also piano and accordion. Kathryn took piano lessons, but for the past 6 years has specialized in tap and acrobatic dancing. They do a lot of entertaining at church, lodge and club functions.

Under separate cover I am sending our most recent bulb catalogs so as to give you a better idea of our work, and pictures of the family.

Would be pleased to hear from you whenever convenient. Wishing you the best of health and a very Happy New Year.

Your cousin  
Aaron Kanouse

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Letter to Leonard E. Wilson (Trinidad, Colorado) from H. E. [Horace Everett] Wilson, dated November 18, 1924 at Denver, Colorado

My dear son.

Your surprising and more than welcome letter received, as was the pin, for which I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

I have always felt that some day you would try and find me, as I have never been able to locate you. There has never been a day that I have not thought of you and wondered where you were and what you were doing. I have thought of you when I have been on lone trips and when I was where I was supposed to be having a good time. It is very hard for me to realize that you are a young man, as the last time I saw you you were a little fellow not quite three years old. You sat on my lap and when I kissed you goodbye you cried and said "Please don't go Daddy." Son, that will soon be 17 years. How have you fared all those years? I hope you have not had to go through what I have and that you have had a kind thought for me once in a while, and I hope that some day you will know the truth about things and will see that some times we can suffer in silence, and trust to God that right will prevail in the end.

There is nothing that would please me more than to have a long letter from you telling me how you have fared these years, and what you are doing at present and what your ambitions are.

The Pin you sent me will be the most treasured possession I have, and I will never part with it.

Now son, write your old "Dad" and open your heart to him as he would like to have you do. Don't be afraid of speaking the truth, as I am not narrow minded and can always see both sides of the equation. Whether you answer this or not, always stand for what is upright and noble, and be always ready to defend the right.

A letter will always reach me through your Grandmother Wilson or your Aunt Leonie. I am not a very good letter writer and they do not hear from me as often as they should. You try and make it up to your Grandmother, who is getting very feeble, and who has always thought of you and tried to keep in touch with you and give me what little consolation I have had since I lost you. God bless you.

Your loving father  
H. E. Wilson

Letter [to Leonie Rinker] from H. E. [Horace Everett] Wilson, dated Aug. 23, 1937 at Yuma, Arizona

My dear Sister:

It has been a very long time since I wrote you, but I have not forgotten you. I have started to write many times but never succeeded in finishing any of the letters.

I am away from home the greater part of the time, especially the last three years. I have been away since the 11<sup>th</sup> of November last year, with the exception of a few days off and on. I have been here since the 12<sup>th</sup> of this month, having been called while eating supper and leaving Riverside about 8 o'clock that night and driving through, arriving here about 2 AM. I will be here about ten days or two weeks more. I am now next in line to the Transformer Dept. foreman, therefore am getting all the outside work. It seems a long time since I started to work for the Company. It will soon be ten years, and will have ten more to put in before retirement age.

Jennie has not been any too well the past few years, and since Leonie and the baby came home she has failed fast.

George's mother finally got him away from Leonie with all kinds of promises. Leonie called her mother one morning in March, I happened to be home at the time, one Monday morning, and said if we wanted to see her alive to come and get her. Jennie called me up and I went right over and found Leonie and the baby nearly starved. Leonie had had nothing but what the baby left in her bottle since the previous Saturday noon, and one of the neighbors had taken the baby over to her house to keep her warm as it was pouring down rain. The neighbor told me it had been something terrible the way George had been doing, ever since the baby came. Wanted Leonie to give the baby to his Sister.

Patricia is sure one sweet baby. The boys are crazy about her and Jennie can get her to do anything with her.

Leonie is suing for a divorce; the trial will come up about two weeks.

The twins graduated from Jr. High this year and start in Poly next month. They are sure some boys, all three over six feet, and mighty good to mind and help around home. Nyman will graduate next year from Poly, so it won't be long before we have no one in school.

The boys have tried so hard this year to find work, having gone as far as fifty miles looking for work, with no success, although they manage to get in a day once in a while. As soon as they find out I work for the Power Company, there is no work for them.

I have been in exceptionally good health the last two years, although I am beginning to get very tired from the long hours and so much traveling. I started my vacation the 2<sup>nd</sup> of August, and was called back to work at three o'clock the same day, so do not expect to get it now before the last of the year, if then.

How are you, John, Theodore, and Catherine? Hope all are well. Have you seen or heard from Leonard or Betty recently? I wrote Leonard from here some two years ago, and have never received a reply. I hope they are doing well, and would love to see them all.

Your loving brother  
H. E. Wilson

Letter to Bettie [Wilson] from Leonie [Rinker], dated Oct. 28, 1937 at Denver, Colo.

My dear Bettie,

I have thought of you so often since receiving your last letter and have intended answering sooner, but fruit canning season is such a busy time, I have postponed writing until now.

I was greatly shocked to hear of your sister's death and at the same time much grieved for you and her family. Death seems to be something none of us can elude, and however much we may anticipate it, we never seem ready to part with our dear ones when they are called. Do you suppose your sister had infantile paralysis? She was so young to have the old fashioned kind. You are certainly an angel in disguise to take her baby, and I am so happy to know he has such a good home. My mother reared a niece under similar circumstances, and she was the only sister I ever had. She remained with us until she died at the age of twenty-two.

Poor Leonie Eileen is having her troubles, but instead of explaining I will enclose a letter from her father written some time ago. Have not heard since. It is a great pity that some mothers are such meddlers with their children's happiness. Hope some one uses a rolling pin on me if I ever get obstreperous.

How do you like La Junta after spending a summer there? I presume you are nicely settled by now, and that Donald and Dorothy are busy in school. It hardly seems possible that school has been in session two months.

How does Leonard like his new business location? Hope it proves a bonanza.

We had a nice trip last summer, although we found the heat very oppressive at times. We first visited in Miami, Florida. From there we took the boat to Cuba, where we spent a most delightful week, returning via Tampa, New Orleans, and Shreveport. Then we stopped in Dallas at the fair, but as the thermometer there registered 114°, we derived neither pleasure nor benefit from it and were most happy to arrive home, where we could get a good breeze from the mountains.

We have had such a beautiful fall, but I presume you have also, as we are not so far apart. The weather has been so mild, we regret having closed our mountain cabin the fifteenth of this month.

With much love for each of you, and hoping to see you in Denver soon, I remain

Aff. yours,  
Aunt Leonie

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Letter to Leonie [Rinker] from Len [Wilson], dated Nov. 3, 1937

Dear Aunt Leonie:

Betty received your letter of Oct. 28<sup>th</sup>, and you'll probably hear from her in a few days. She's got her hands full right now with another patient. The little niece, Elsie, had her tonsils removed today. A few weeks ago it was Dorothy. Donnie has graduated from the hospital ward, but is now playing football and may be a candidate again soon.

During the past two weeks I've been away most of the time, covering Lamar and Alamosa and working on a new police broadcast hookup for 10 counties in this neck of the woods. Today I was in Limon and

Hugo. I'm still working on that first million. (Hi) It's getting so that when I am in town I don't have time to go home. About once a week, at any rate, it's an all night job, and every day it's 10:00 a.m. until midnight or later. Usually later.

But Betty is well and so am I. That's all that matters.

It's seldom that I write a personal letter, and I'm no great hand at it. Betty handles that job. But I wanted to let you know that we are always glad to get your letters and appreciate them very much.

The letter you enclosed from my father will be returned to you in a few days, as soon as I get a chance to look it over a little more carefully. I'll probably need it for reference to get enough to write about, in a letter to him.

I remember the letter he referred to, and it seems to me that I did reply. But that was while we were in Clovis, and although I'm a pack-rat about keeping files, the Clovis files were left behind and destroyed.

But I remember it particularly because I asked a lot of questions and was, well—not anxious—but interested, in getting a reply. If that letter went astray I'll have to start all over again and it will take time.

You see, it's not the easiest thing in the world to write to some-one that's practically a stranger, and it's not often that I even allow myself time to even think about things that are so important to the average fellow.

Well, when I started this letter I figured on knocking off a few lines to thank you for your letter, and all of a sudden I find that I've used up a whole page and haven't got anywhere yet. Now, for economy's sake, I'll have to use up the rest of page 2. I guess that's a habit. For almost 9 years I've used a large part of my time in spoiling ream after ream of copy paper, so don't pay any attention if I just seem to ramble along, far into the night.

Getting back to the point, nothing can ever change the love and respect I always had for Grandma Wilson, because she was always nice to me and glad to see me. And I'd rather do anything than spoil the good opinion so often expressed in kindness to me by yourself and Mr. Rinker.

But you see, I've been on my own ever since I started in school. When I was in the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade I sold papers and built up a route. By the time I was in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade I had the exclusive agency for Curtis publications. My clothes and books were always paid for by my own earnings. After the 6<sup>th</sup> grade, I expanded my knowledge to include many vacation-time jobs and before and after school jobs. Those things included everything from digging graves to shoveling concrete, the building trade, and peddling shoe strings.

Then for a year, between grade school and high school, I was shipping clerk for the Mountain Electric Co. in Denver. (Before they sold out to G.E. Supply.) Incidentally, I didn't lose a year of school because somehow I had previously found time to make two grades in one year.

After that—Trinidad, and high school. And for "recreation" I held down the night jailer's job from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. and on Saturdays drove a truck for the city. (Still taking care of all personal expenses and a little more.)

Finally, after high school, I put in 8 years at The Trinidad Creamery Company, and held down every job from washing cans to managing a business that grew to include the whole southwest for its territory.



During that time, I didn't know what to do with my evenings so I started fooling with radio. Now it's fooling me all the time.

All this sounds foolish, because I'm still beating around the bush, and getting nowhere. But can't you see why it's a hard job to write that letter that's on the "must" list just the same?

I've been "on the spot" a thousand times, and I'm still taking big chances with one idea in mind. Believe it or not, that idea is to stick it out through thick and thin so that my kids will have a few breaks that I didn't get. (For all that, they'll probably end up like preacher's sons.)—(But not if I can help it!)

I have always tried to learn everything there was to know about any job I've undertaken. But writing a letter to my father is a job I know very little about. Consequently it'll be a very poor job.

"Once there was a young fellow about 19. He knew it all, as per usual. Then he got married at 21 and started a home of his own. Though his father apparently knew very little while the young fellow was 19, the young fellow was surprised to see how much the old man had learned in 2 years."

That's a little story, briefly told, that holds a world of truth. It's worth more than a casual laugh. I think of it often when I get a little "cocky". And, converted to suit the need, it has often saved me embarrassment when I've bucked the other man's game. It has taught me caution, and I never jump to conclusions.

Perhaps that's the reason why I wrote to Horace E. Wilson in San Francisco while I was still a kid, thinking he was my father. Instead, he proved to be an uncle. I've still got the letter he sent me. It was his letter that told me all I know about the Wilson family. Of course, that was a long time ago.

To my friends and associates I have always seemed 10 years older than I am, but tonight I'm writing like a silly kid.

I don't know what it is, but something gets under my skin every once in a while. I'll write that letter.

Love and regards  
LEN

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Letter to Leonard E. Wilson (La Junta, Colorado) from H. E. [Horace Everett] Wilson, dated March 24, 1940 at Riverside, Calif.

Dear Leonard:

Your letter received some time ago and was more than glad to hear from you. We have often spoken of you and wondered where you were.

Nyman sent you one of his graduation pictures two years ago, and we have wondered if you ever received it. It was mailed you through your Aunt Leonie. Nyman has been out of school two years and has not been able to find any work with the exception of a day now and then. I don't suppose in all it has amounted to a month's work all told. The twins Clarence and Harry are in their last year at Poly High and all three of them say that they are going to join the army as there is no work to be had out here. In fact the work is given to men from out of the state in preference to the local men. This is quite a problem in So. California, but I suppose the same condition prevails elsewhere.

Yes, Leonie married again and is living in Orange at the present time, but expects to move to Glendale the first of the month, where Lloyd is going to work for one of the airplane companies. I do not know their street address, but know that any mail sent to her addressed Mrs. Lloyd Trickey, Tustin, California, will reach her, as that is where her Father in law lives, and he is very prominent in the affairs of the orange growers there and is well known. Will send you her address as soon as I can find out just where they will live. We expect them up today. Patricia is getting to be some girl.

Mom has been sick in bed the past two days and may have to go to the hospital for an operation. As for me, I am O.K., being too ornery to have anything the matter with me. We moved into Riverside on account of her health. As the boys are away all day and I am out of town a great deal of the time, decided it was best to be closer in to town. I have been on the road nearly all the time the past five years, but as things look now may get to be home this summer.

We rented our place and are renting at present, but may make a trade for this place providing the owner will put the right price on the place.

How are all of your family? I hope the children are all well, and that Betty keeps well. I would love to see all of you. I have never forgotten the few days I spent with you in Trinidad. They were some of the happiest I have spent in a good many years!

No, son, I have never had a letter in reply to mine I wrote you from Yuma, and sent you at Clovis. I presume it went astray where so much of our mail did in Arlington Post Office. Ever since the present postmaster there went in the mail service has been terrible, and we know that lots of our mail was delivered to another.

I haven't heard from your Aunt Leonie for some time. The last letter I had from her she was not feeling so well. I am such a poor hand to write when once I get out of the habit, but as long as the letters keep coming I manage to answer them, and will try to keep up my end by answering sooner.

Let's have a letter from you telling all about the family. You know that I think you have a fine helpmate in Betty, and I think the world of her and only wish we could all be nearer so that we could get better acquainted. There are lots of things I would like to tell you, and some day I may. They might throw a little light on some things that now seem very queer to you.

With love to all the family, yourself included, I am

Your loving father  
H. E. Wilson

Am returning the letters you enclosed as you may want them.

I almost forgot to thank you for the picture you sent of the family. It sure is a fine picture and you are to be congratulated on having such a fine one.

Dad

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Letter [to Rose Nash from Leonard Wilson], dated Nov. 1, 1940

Dear Mom:

I have been thinking about you more in the past few weeks than I have for a long while. Now, I really don't mean that the way it might sound, but I mean that I have wanted to write you and last week I thought I might have an opportunity to see you.

But, last week I hopped a train for Lockhaven Pennsylvania to pick up an airplane for delivery to Colorado Springs. I had to bring a passenger back and first plans were to meet him in New York City. In that case I could have stopped at Syracuse and would have had a chance to see you. But, weather conditions were very bad for flying on last Sunday. One fellow left Lockhaven for Boston with a brand new ship. He didn't get it home. They found him on the side of a mountain Monday.

With a day lost, and conditions generally bad, my passenger met me in Lockhaven and I didn't get the chance to go on to New York. The training ship which is being used in Colorado Springs was cracked up by a student a few days before and they were really in a fix for the new ship which had to be delivered as quickly as possible, and so there was nothing left to do but hop back as quick as possible. The weather was bad all the way, and I spent most of last Thursday sitting down in a field at Burlington Colorado, waiting for the wind to go down. However, otherwise the trip was okay and there wasn't any trouble. In this way I got in a lot of flying time with expenses paid. I'm getting to be a chizzler when it comes to ferrying ships around, and am getting close to the time when I can get a commercial license to add to my collection of commercial radio tickets.

Oh yes, perhaps Betty has told you, I am also a professor now. That's a laugh, but I have taken two examinations and have taught ground school for a C.A.A. non-college group of hopefuls during the past three months. I have a rating as ground school instructor in Civil Air Regulations and Meteorology. Adding this stuff to my usual long hours at KOKO, Betty is really a widow. But, she is also a good scout and is putting up with it, although sometimes I really don't know how she does it. Things have been tough as hell the last year, and I haven't been able to deliver the goods on some of the things I've promised her.

The kids are all getting along fine, and it is sure hard to realize that Donnie is in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade and plays in the high school band already. He will be in high school next year. Dorothy is getting big too, and is now in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade. It won't be too long until Jimmie will be in school too. He is sure getting big, and is cutting a flock of jaw teeth now. He jabbers and does his best to talk. He can say a lot of words now, and believe me he doesn't have too much trouble in getting his ideas across anyway.

Well, that's the way the world goes I guess. There really isn't any news except for one situation which Betty has told you about. I've wanted to write you about it, and then I thought it would be easier to tell you about it personally. That's why I was so keen about taking that trip last week. But, since that fizzled, I guess it will be necessary to write about it after all.

I told you a long time ago that while I was still with the creamery I stopped in Riverside California to see Dad. Since that time we've averaged about one letter every two years. It was simply a case of curiosity that got the best of me at that time.

Since then I've realized a lot that both you and he must have missed each other during those hard years from 1905. Of course those were things I never talked about, and you know yourself that I never asked about them. All I know and all I ever knew was so little that you could put it in the corner of your eye and never feel it.

But, as I have got older, and I hope wiser, I have been able to read between the lines and now I'm not afraid or ashamed to ask questions. I often wondered just what really happened to mix things up so.

I remember that you and Grandma always used to urge me to visit Grandma Wilson, and out of loyalty to you I never wanted to do it. In fact, about the only times I ever saw her were when you just about made me do it.

And then those visits were always short, and never covered any conversation beyond the usual “glad to see you” and “goodbye” kind. But, Grandma Wilson always seemed kindly and was always nice to me when I did see her. You’ll remember that she died shortly after Betty and I were married. Since that time I never have wanted to go near the Rinkers, and it was only seldom that any further visits were made.

But, back in about 1933 or 1934 Mr. Rinker came to Clovis and looked me up. He had some paving bonds which he was trying to get the City of Clovis to make good. I understand that he finally did collect on them. One time when I asked him about it he said that they were some bonds he had obtained by advancing money to Dad after Grandma had died. But, he and Aunt Leonie have always acted funny about it and I have wondered about it several times. Finally, I wrote to Dad and asked him about it. He never answered.

About a month ago Leonie, my half-sister, and her husband and little Patsy stopped at the house about ten o’clock one night. I hadn’t seen her since that California trip and then she was only about 8 years old. You can imagine my surprise. Well, they are still here while Lloyd is looking for work. I have helped him line up a job at the new Caddoa Dam, which is being built east of here. He will probably go to work in the next week as soon as new equipment arrives, because he has definitely been promised a job.

Of course during this time I have asked about Grandma Wilson and whether or not Rinker had advanced any money to Dad. So far as Leonie knows, there was never any money received from Denver after Grandma Wilson’s death. I’m wondering now if the Rinkers, J.R. and Aunt Leonie both, weren’t really the real fly in the ointment from the beginning. And I’m wondering whether or not some monkey-business has made it possible for J.R. Rinker to send Theodore and Katherine through College and to have a lot of things. Do you know anything that might cast a little light on this subject?

And, while you are at it, Mom, let’s take our hair down and have a good cry and tell each other all the things we just couldn’t talk about a long time ago. I don’t want you to think that I’ve tossed everything overboard and gone to the camp of the enemy or something like that. It isn’t that mom, but I would like to know all you can tell me about Dad and yourself, and about Grandma Wilson, and what about Grandpa Wilson? I can’t remember anything about him at all. I don’t believe you or anyone even mentioned him. What did he do, and what was his name?

Gosh, these are funny things to be asking about after 36 years, but tell me about everything, will you mom?

By the way, I am applying for a commission in the Royal Canadian Air Force Signal Corps. My application for the bomber ferry service is still pending too, and maybe anytime now I may get called. So, let’s have a nice long letter. And, in the meantime, Betty and I send all our love. So-long, Mom, I’ll write again as soon as I hear from you.

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Letter to Leonard E. Wilson [from Rose Nash], dated Nov 4 - 40 at Syracuse, N.Y.

My Dear Leonard:

Received your welcome letter and always so glad to hear from you, and will try to answer your questions as best I can.

First, I was only with your father four years, green and young. Took his word for everything until I began to realize he was a very poor father and a bad husband. He let you and I go for weeks at a time without sending a cent for our food or clothes. When we were married only 4 months he put a rubber snake under my pillow, and you can imagine how I felt.

Grandma Wilson and his sister knew how he treated me, and Grandma Wilson said to me one day, Rose I don't see how you could ever have married Everett; he never treated me like a Son should treat his Mother. Your grandmother took in roomers and boarders, and worked hard when we were married. Your grandfather was a very fine man. He worked in the Union Telegraph office, did not get a big salary. He passed away when you were one year and a half old, and Everett wanted to borrow \$100 from her and she would not give him one cent. How much money he left her I never knew. Mr. Rinker was very well-to-do when he married your Aunt, and if he loaned any money to your father I never knew about it and your father is the one to tell you. If he doesn't answer you, maybe he has something to hide. In the meantime your grandmother lived a long time with your Aunt, and she loved her dearly, so if your Grandmother had anything to leave your Aunt is the one that should have it, as your dad never did anything at all for his mother or father. Your father even wore his father's shoes the day of his funeral. Sorry to tell you this Leonard, but it was my hard luck and you are a good son and I am proud of you, and God knows I tried to be a good mother to you. Let me give you a little advice: don't let any of your relatives make a fool of you. It is alright to help one, but there is a limit to all things. Your father was to pay me \$15 a month for your support until you were 21 years old, and he paid for one year, so he has that to think about. Hope he is better to his other family.

So sorry to think you were so near to us and could not get over to Syracuse. Do hope you will be able to come this way, and if you come and find us not home the elevator girl will have a key to let you in until 9 o'clock, and we never stay out any later, so please wait until we come.

Charles and I have been married 13 years in Sept., and he is as good to me as anyone could be. We never quarrel and could live with one another 50 years, and I know it is the same with you and Betty and hope you will have a long and happy life together. You have a lovely little family, and I am proud of it. As to your flying, my prayers will always be with you, and I am sure you will serve your country well and that will indeed make me very happy. I have your baby shoe bronzed and will give it to Dorothy some day.

Some day I hope you can hear me play the accordion. I have been taking lessons on the piano, and I can play several lovely pieces.

Well Leonard, hope this will not tire you out. Wish I was smart enough to have used the typewriter; that is beyond me. Please write to me soon again, and I do want to see you all so much. Will answer Betty's and the children's letters real soon, so will close with all my love, and best wishes as ever.

Your Mother

Cousin Frances said Frankie Miller is flying too. He has a wife and a dear little girl. You remember him: he was with Frances when they visited us in Trinidad.

Well happy landing  
Your Mother

(write soon)

Hope you will not think this is a Chinese puzzle [the writing was turned in several different directions on different parts of the pages]

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Letter [to Horace Everett Wilson] from Len [Wilson], dated Jan. 29, 1941

Dear Dad:

For quite a while now, I have been trying to find time and get in the mood to write again. I'm sorry that so much time has slipped by since your letter of November 10<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>.

However, I want you to know that I really appreciate that letter. It really gave me a lot of information on things I've always wanted to know. And, incidentally, it may be of great help to me in getting what I am after.

On March 29<sup>th</sup> we will have to shift frequency on KOKO, if present tentative treaty plans with Canada, Mexico, and Cuba are finally ironed out. Between now and that time there are also many detailed reports to get out, including State and Federal income tax reports, corporation reports, annual reports, etc. Just as soon as these things are out of the way I intend to go to Canada and apply for a Commission there in the Signal Branch of the R.A.F. A lot of information is required on such an application. That is one reason why I appreciate the letter you sent on Nov. 10<sup>th</sup>.

Man, they want to know everything about a fellow—more even than I knew myself. Birth certificates for myself and all the children, marriage certificate, school certificates, pictures, and history! Plenty. But, if this situation continues it may be worthwhile for me to get in something that will at least support the family while I am gone, rather than to take chances on getting enough to just get by, or less.

I understand, from what Leonie told me, that Nyman has already joined the army. What did he go in for—mechanics, or what? And what about the twins, Clarence and Harry? I have some snapshots Leonie gave me. All the boys seem to be pretty husky. I'd like to know Nyman's address so I could write him sometime.

As you know, Leonie and Lloyd went to Kansas the day before Thanksgiving. They were here for nearly 7 weeks. I got Lloyd a chance on the Caddoa Dam. But, he didn't know enough about handling a big machine they put him in, so they yanked him off in about 30 minutes and wouldn't give him another chance. It seems like tough luck, but I have talked to the men in charge down there since that time, and they say they can tell in a lot less than 30 minutes whether or not a fellow knows his stuff, so that's that. One thing though, he seemed very willing to work and hustled to find a job all the while here. I don't know what he is doing now, but he couldn't make connections here.

The situation in Denver remains the same. I've never had more than a hunch to go on, and so have to go slow. In order to start it was necessary to write you, as I did, and I also wrote to Mom. She says that I'm all wet. Quoting her letter, she said, "Your Grandmother took in roomers and boarders, and worked hard—. Your Grandfather worked at Western Union and did not get a big salary—. Mr. Rinker was very well to do when he married your Aunt—. In the meantime, your Grandmother lived with your aunt a long time and loved her dearly.—So, if your Grandmother had anything to leave, your Aunt is the one who should have it—." These are just a few of the things mentioned, so it has more or less put the damper on some of my ideas, which may have been erroneous. You see, I have always felt that if anyone had any reason to kick it would be Mom, and she has nothing but good to say of everyone.

You asked about the old folks. Well, they are getting old, both of them close to 85. Granddad still goes to the shop and opens up every morning at 7 a.m., and he hits the ball all day long. I sure hope I have as much pep as he has when I'm anywhere near that old. Grandma Lino still does all her own housework, and gets around a lot better than many young women. They're great people! George has finally settled

down and is a guard at the State penitentiary. I think he is a desk sergeant now. He's been there about 4 years. George is married and has two fine youngsters, a boy and a girl.

You and I are about in the same boat when it comes to writing letters. Just last Saturday I was so far behind in correspondence, I stayed here until 4 a.m. getting out 42 letters, and there are many that have to be answered every day. Personal letters always have to wait, and everyone who does write personal letters to me has a real kick coming about replies. But, eventually they do get out.

I'm trying for a commercial pilot's license now. I have that trip to Canada, which Betty will take with me, and then I'll be eligible for some time from the government to put me over the top. At present, and for the last 6 months, I have been teaching ground school for the C.A.A. pilot training course in La Junta, and in February will take on the Lamar Junior College bunch in Navigation. I hold C.A.A. ground instructor ratings in Navigation, C.A.R., and Meteorology. (Just trying to make my flying pay for itself, and hoping that someday I can own a ship of my own.)

Things have been tougher than the devil here for the last 6 months, which is another reason for delaying my trip North. But they should open up soon. (Lloyd left here owing close to a hundred dollars. I've paid part of it and will have to take care of the rest of it this next month. That didn't help.)

I sure hope that you are feeling better now, and that you'll let me know where you are from time to time. Write whenever you can, and I'll sure try to get an answer out.

Betty and I will write to Leonie's mother in the next few days, too. Please give her our best regards.

LEN.

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Letter to Leonard and Betty Wilson from Leonie Trickey, dated May 17 1943 at Maywood, Calif.

Dearest Leonard and Betty.

This is going to be a short letter as it is going to be hard to write. As you know, dad passed away May 11 and was laid to rest May 14<sup>th</sup> at 2:30 at the Olivewood Cemetery. The services were beautiful, he had so many Floral Tributes. Gee Leonard, I hated to look at him because I was so sure I'd break down, but I was the last to leave. I guess I stood there five minutes. He looked so very nice, not like he was gone but like he was just resting.

Mother held up pretty well, although she did break down when she was looking at him. The boys had to take her out.

Mother was hoping you could come, as dad loved you so much. Leonard, let's not forget each other because daddy's gone. The boys were so proud of you when you were out here.

Dad didn't have all his boys with him, as Harry is overseas, and you couldn't make it. Lloyd is up north and I couldn't get in touch with him, as he is driving a bus for the Santa Fe Trailways.

I can't tell you just what was the matter with dad, as the doctors don't seem to understand the case. He just coughed and fell off his work bench dead. Mother said he had been feeling better than he has for a long time, and Tuesday morning when he went to work he was feeling good, and by 4:30 he was gone. They say he even sat with the fellows and ate his lunch, but Leonard, he really looked terrible: just skin over his bones. I just wanted to cry when I looked at him; he spent most of his Sundays in bed.

I'm going to close for now and write you again and also send you some pictures of Dad. Mother is sending you something that belonged to dad.

Tell the children Hello.

Love, Leonie

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Letter to Leonard Wilson from Leonie W. Rinker, dated May 22, 1943 at Denver, Colo.

My dear Leonard,

After waiting what I thought was a reasonable length of time and not hearing further from Jennie, I wrote to The Press to send me copies of their May 12-13-14 issues. I thought, perhaps, I might gain some information from them of my Brother's death; but all I found was the enclosed clipping. There was a mistake, as my Brother's name was Horace Everett and not Harry. You will probably be surprised to learn that you reside in Denver. We may never know the particulars of Brother's last illness, but in his letter to me several weeks ago, he mentioned having recently undergone an operation on his back, so I presume his health had not been very good recently. I notice from the clipping that the married twin is the father of two boys. The other one is in the Navy and has not been home for over a year. The oldest boy is in training for the tank service. Leonie is living in Maywood, which is so near Riverside she gets home every two weeks. This news was gleaned from my last letter.

If my memory does not play me tricks, you had your thirty-ninth birthday May 4. Congratulations! May you live to enjoy many more and may the years be filled with happiness, prosperity, and usefulness.

Sorry you and the children had a siege of chicken pox last winter. Take my advice and do not try to keep up with the little ones. You had your chance, now let them enjoy such pleasures as chicken pox, measles, mumps, and whooping cough, and you be nurse and onlooker. Hope Bettie did not succumb to it.

We are enjoying our usual health, which means John is in bed about half the time and Catherine is tired out all the time with trying to fill three jobs at once. You and she ought to get together on the work situations.

Theodore expects to go to El Paso on business in a few days, and with the travelling situation as it is, he is looking forward to it with little pleasure.

It has been rainy and cool all this month but June is not far away, so I presume we can depend on some pleasant weather soon.

With much love to you, Bettie, and the children, and hoping we may see you before long, I remain

Aff. your aunt,  
Leonie W. Rinker.

Enclosed newspaper clipping:

WILSON—In Riverside, Calif., May 11, 1943, Harry E. Wilson, aged 60 years. Late resident of 3199 Chestnut street, Riverside, Calif. Beloved husband of Mrs. Jennie M. Wilson of Riverside, Calif. Loved father of Clarence R. Wilson of Riverside, Mrs. Leonie Trickey of Maywood, Calif., Harry E. Wilson, Jr.,



of the U.S. Army and Nyman A. Wilson of San Diego, U.S. Navy, and Leonard Everett Wilson of Denver, Colorado. Also survived by three grandchildren, Patricia Marie Trickey, Lawrence Robert Wilson and Clarence Ralph Wilson. Funeral services will be conducted in the E. H. Preston Funeral Home chapel Friday, May 14th at 2:30 o'clock. Interment in Olivewood cem [rest cut off]